

- 245 *tejocote* as a domesticated type. It is harvested and exported for making jellies and preserves. A few are used locally.
[252]
[439] Some quince trees are found in Cherán. They are little used, but some preserves are made.

BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

- 241 Most beliefs and customs center about maize. Most important are the beliefs about red ears, *čóču*. A red ear is described as the mother, chief, and *ace* (ceremonial leader) of all maize. In the storage lofts, red ears are mixed in with the yellow and white to act as guardian of the rest. They are never eaten until all the white and the yellow corn are gone. Care is taken to plant seed from one or more red ears in each field; otherwise it is believed that there will be no harvest.

- [755] Red ears and black ears are both said to be used in curing, but no details could be secured.

Twin ears, *cuates* (*šaninkuáte*), are said to come because God wishes to send a little more. Sometimes large ears have four or five points; they are said to be the hand of the planter.

- [782] The family harvesting the first green corn in the town places two or three ears on the altar of San Francisco. Each family gives one or two *cargas* of maize on the cob to the priest.

- 789 If the rains do not come at the proper time near the end of May, the image of San Ramos [778] is taken to the peak of San Marcos. The image is placed on a white sheet, held by a man at each corner, and tossed in the sheet. If San Ramos can be made to cry, it begins to rain immediately. During the rite a *rezador* recites a rosary, copal is burned, and *cohetes* are fired.

- 241 Every year, beginning in January, the grass is burned, causing great damage to the forests and destroying the last remnants of pasture. The burning is said to prevent heavy frosts, while the smoke hastens the coming of the rains. Town officials and officers of the Forest Service succeeded in extinguishing most of the fires in 1940.
[632]

It is said there are no beliefs regarding wheat. Nevertheless, wheat must be carried in a wooden bowl while sowing or it will be attacked by rust, "*tecolote*." Rust is a sign the planter used his hat, blanket, or some other improper article at planting. Girls plait elab-

776 sometimes as a *bullo* (indistinct form) which whistles to people and gets them to follow it until they are lost in the woods. One informant, named Juan, said he had been seized in the Cerro del Aire and was able to escape only by recommending himself to the patron saint, San Juan. Otherwise he would have fallen in a cave where the devil could have seized him.

[356] In Urén in La Cañada it is said that the *miri₇gua* appears where money has been hidden. If someone gets rich suddenly it is said that "he has encountered the *miri₇gua*." The *miri₇gua* is also said to appear in the shape of dog or cat, but these are really disguised witches.

356 When houses are repaired or reconditioned, it is customary to hang up flowers, usually fastening the flowers to strings which are looped over doorways and windows. The practice was said to be customary and no beliefs concerning it could be discovered.

782 When the rains are late in coming in May, the image of one of the saints is taken to the top of the Sierra San Marcos, south of town. 789 There the image is raised up and down several times and *cohetes* are fired. Even sceptics admit it usually rains soon after this; some of the naive attribute the rain to the *cohetes*, others to the proximity of the rainy season.

821 When the mountain of Pilón, east of town, has mist on top, it is going to rain, say many. The early rains come from the direction of Pilón, the later from the direction of San Marcos.

787 If people are seated and a dog comes and howls, some misfortune may befall the people.

825 The coyote has magical power over animals. If he just gives himself a shake, the chickens will walk over to him and let themselves be eaten.

A person who finds a dead deer in the mountains which he has not killed will have some misfortune befall his family. A son, brother, parent, etc., will certainly die, and there is no way of averting the misfortune.

If a coyote crosses the road in front of one, it is a sign some misfortune will occur.

A blue-bellied lizard found occasionally in Cherán is believed to be able to jump on a person's back without his knowing it and burrow inside. It leaves a blue lizard mark on the

825 back where it enters, but no further beliefs
787 could be discovered.

An animal said to be unique in Cherán is the *hachoque* or *ečékurita*. It resembles a lizard and is spotted black and white. It lives in corners, inside the walls of houses, or in the stone pillars. It does not bite or injure people, but it is believed to suckle the breasts of nursing mothers while they are sleeping, taking all the milk. The animal cannot be killed with blows or by cutting it up, for the pieces reunite. Only by burning it with coals can it be killed.

823 A very clever man once went up on San Marcos and struck the mountain. Water poured out, creating a *barranca*, and continued for several days until the plain west of town was covered several feet deep. The priest then went up the mountain and ordered the water to stop, which it did.

821 Against hurricanes and hail, a cross is made
263 in the patio or the street, of ashes, taken from
789 the household fireplace. Salt is not put in the fire for this purpose.

[text continues on top of p. 163 b]

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

128 In the preceding sections the culture of Cherán has been treated primarily from its technological and institutional aspects. The position of individuals and their activities have been discussed, it is true, but the orientation has been toward generalized and institutionalized activities. In the following pages will be discussed the activities which are more directly individual in character. This is not to say that many of these activities are not institutionalized; certainly the wedding ceremonies, for example, are quite as institutionalized in character as the *mayordomía*. Nevertheless, the wedding is more closely related to the development of individual personal relationships. Emphasis in succeeding pages will be upon the crisis periods in the individual and upon the developmental and behavioral patterns in the intervals between crises.

It will be obvious in the following discussion that treatment of the role of the individual in the culture and the impact of the culture upon the individual is very incomplete. Particular weaknesses are apparent in the discussion of infancy

[text continues on middle of p. 163 b]

- 789 The crosses put on top of houses are to
821 protect them from lightning or whirlwinds.

481 If people swim in Las Pilas, a small pond
823 northeast of town, they will sink after swim-
ming out a certain distance. Horses will
drown there also.

- 821 Eclipses are thought the work of some higher
power and that nothing can be done about them.
There is no fear of eclipses, though, except in
connection with childbirth. Some believe
eclipses result from struggles between sun,
moon, and earth. The defeated element is said
to devour part of the foetus, causing adhesions
between various parts and the womb and making
birth difficult. No beliefs could be discovered
about the stars. Indeed, informants insisted
that there were no names for the stars and that
people did not distinguish one from the other.
This is unusual if true.

Mention should be made here of beliefs in the
evil eye and in *los aires*, "the airs or winds."
They will be discussed in connection with
disease concepts and curing.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

- 128 and childhood and in the part of women. These
lacks are inevitable, not only from the shortness
of the study, but from the special attitudes in
Cherán which closed so many avenues of
approach to male investigators. Material col-
lected by Rendón is very helpful, but it is
fragmentary and insufficient. It does show,
though, that women investigators could secure
many data otherwise difficult to collect.

BIRTH

- 842 Children are generally desired in Cherán, and
motherhood is regarded as normal and expect-
able. There is a clear idea of the physiological
causation of pregnancy, and normally no means
are taken to avoid it. Men are said to prefer
boys and women to prefer girls, but whatever the
sex, both parents usually welcome the child and
wish many, and childbirth appears to cause
minimal emotional disturbances, although they
are not lacking. Although no accurate data
were available, informants did not believe there
were more than six or eight women in Cherán
who had not borne children. Some said that

843 sidered frequent symptoms also. Sometimes in the early months women are sick at their stomachs and vomit in the mornings.

Usually a midwife is sought early in pregnancy and pays frequent visits to the enceinte woman. The midwife massages the woman with lard or cooking oil "to make sure the foetus is in the right position" and generally keeps an eye on the patient's health. Sometimes the midwife locates the head of the child during the massage. A fee of 10 centavos is charged for each visit.

A pregnant woman should not do much work, should not lift heavy things, and should take frequent baths in cold water in the house. She continues to grind corn and carry water; young mothers, indeed, are encouraged to keep active by older women, who believe some exercise helps the mother. She does not cook tortillas if she can avoid it, because the fire might "cook" the foetus. Toward the end of pregnancy some women are "delicate" and eat very little. At Capacuaro this is customary in the last days of pregnancy. Otherwise there are no prenatal food taboos.

843 An eclipse during pregnancy may cause something bad to happen to the child. To
821 prevent the effects, a red belt is worn under-
[789]neath the several belts worn by women who dress in traditional costume. If Mestizo costume is worn, red underwear is used. Women should do nothing during an eclipse. The
[144]occurrence of Mongoloid spot is reported. It is believed that this is caused by the woman carrying her coins in the customary fashion in her belt during pregnancy.

843 Women should not tie any animals during pregnancy, as this may cause the child to be strangled by the umbilical cord during birth. If the mother urinates where some animal has urinated, the child may be born with some part of the animal. Reports were given by midwives of children having been born with a pig face or a goat face and tail because the mother urinated where these animals had urinated. In the latter part of pregnancy a woman should always remove the lid from a vessel before lifting it from the fire; if she fails to observe this rule, the child may be born dumb. Clubfoot is caused by the mother not taking proper care of herself.

[p. 165b]

845 Wrong positions, especially breech presentations, may result from several causes. The mother may have moved around too much and worked too hard, hit a dog with her foot, put the "foot" of a stick of wood in the fire first, failed to remove the *comal* from the fire immediately after finishing the cooking of tortillas, eaten toasted tortillas, or eaten off the metate (the latter taboo was explained on the basis that the metate has only three legs). Children are born blind only because "God wills it."

● [789] Witches may interfere with pregnancy and make the child arrive dead. The preventive remedy is to cook tomato peeling and a potsherd of Guadalajara ware together and drink the liquid.

843 Fathers are also under some restrictions during the period of pregnancy. Whenever a load of wood is brought to the house it must be untied immediately or the child may be strangled by the umbilical cord. Also, the father must not kill lizards or snakes during the pregnancy, or touch resin or turpentine, or they will enter into the child. Some say the father should not kill any kind of an animal, from a snail to an ox. If he does so, the animal will enter into the child through the mouth or nose and the child will be born dead. One midwife thought the father should not have relations with his wife after the third or fourth month of pregnancy for reasons of cleanliness, but some say difficult birth or wrong positions may result from continued intercourse. The father should not work on the day of birth.

844 No distinction is made between first and subsequent births. Midwives varied in their ideas as to the frequency of births. Some believed that women had children from 1 to 1½ years apart, others said from 8 months to 3 years. [842] One midwife explained that the number of children and the frequency of births were determined by something resembling links in the uterus. These could be counted by the midwife, who could tell how many children the woman would have and, by the spacing, what the interval between births would be. Some women might be capable of as many as 25 pregnancies.

All births are attended by midwives, who form a professional group, although without

796

On Palm Sunday palms brought from the hot country are taken to the church to be blessed. Formerly a more elaborate observance was held. An image representing Christ was mounted on the image of a burro called San Ramos. The images were carried on a stretcher to the spring supplying water and were put in a little shrine made of flowers. To this spot came youths who had left 2 weeks earlier to secure palms. The youths came down to the spring from a place called La Mesa, wearing carnations and little gourds about their necks and cracking their whips. The girls brought music for dancing and also provided *čuripo* and *kurúndas*. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon all went with the palms to the church.

On Holy Thursday there formerly was a market at which the principal goods sold were clothing and fruit from the hot country. People purchased the latter to make offerings to the church for the decoration of the altar.

[755] Holy Saturday the girls carried small, highly decorated jars of water to be blessed. These were used later to cure the sick and to protect from "fright" (*espanto*). When the church

• [789] bells ring, children and fruit trees are shaken so that they will grow more rapidly. Images of Judas are burned on the street corners at this moment also. They are provided by anyone who feels like doing so.

In April the *regidor* notifies the youths to clean the spring. The boys provide music and the girls bring them *čuripo* and *kurúndas*.

The day of the Assumption, most people go to the fiesta at the town of Huáncito. On their return, the wild honey collectors go through the streets announcing the fiesta of Corpus. They play the *chirimía* and make a special cry called *pitakuri*.

Two days before the fiesta of Corpus, bread is made in all the houses. The night before Corpus, each *barrio* hires musicians to play. On the day of Corpus the girls bathe at the spring. On their return they dress for church. In the afternoon, boys and girls gather and present each other with fruit and trinkets.

The following day there is a large fiesta in the plaza. The ox drivers bring out their oxen with the yokes decorated with silk kerchiefs, ribbons, and flowers. The drivers also decorate their hats with flowers and their goads with

773 him back. When the master found out what
 775 had happened, however, he forgave her be-
 fore she had redeemed her debt and she
 was able to go to heaven.

* * *

776 An outline of the nature of the saints
 778 and of the main features of their cult has
 been given before. Most tales about the
 saints refer to apparitions and miracles.

The saint's image appears to some per-
 son who sees, hears, or dreams of it and
 calls the attention of the people. Often it is
 a shapeless piece of wood or stone in which
 someone imagines he sees a saint, usually
 Christ or a Virgin of Guadalupe. There
 are a number of such Guadalupe which
 usually draw only the personal devotion
 of the discoverer although sometimes more
 people bring flowers and candles to the
 stone. The apparitions of some famous
 saints are told in this same way. The
 saints, having gained recognition because
 of some miracle, are taken to the town's
 church, where later they are shaped into
 well formed images. Stones are inter-
 preted as Virgins while Christs appear as
 pieces of wood which bleed when struck
 by an axe.

776 Saints occasionally wander on earth.
 The Virgin of Cocucho goes to Ocumicho
 after Saint Peter. Saint James in Azajo
 used to leave the church during the
 Revolution in order to fight. Saint Peter in
 Jarácuaro left the town when the people
 were split politically and the church was
 closed, and experiences are told of how he
 was seen in the hills or how he was seen
 on his way to Tarejero where he went.

776 Tales about the activities of the saints
 789 refer mostly to their miracles, rewarding
 the good and punishing the evil. In answer
 to a vow offered by the devout, the saint
 can perform a miracle granting what was
 asked of him. Some of these miracles be-
 come elaborate stories like that of the man
 condemned to death by the agraristas and
 saved by Saint Peter. Or in the following
 two stories, saints saved the cargueros
 who had pledged their souls to the Devil
 in order to obtain money with which to
 make the festival:

539 "Once there was a lazy man. He had taken
 a cargo and the fiesta was coming closer and
 his wife said to him, 'Our fiesta day is coming
 and if you don't get busy, with what money
 are we going to make the fiesta? Well, how are
 we going to do it then?' 'Well,' he said, 'to-
 morrow I'll go out and see what I can find.' The